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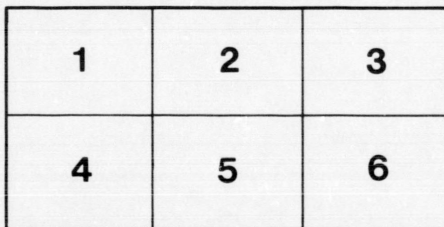
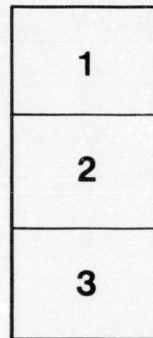
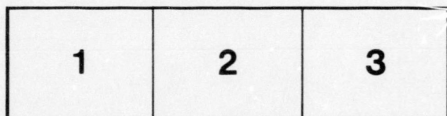
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SERMON,
PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
MONTREAL,

DURING THE SITTING OF THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD,

ON SEPTEMBER 13TH, 1868,

BEING THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE DEATH

OF THE

MOST REVEREND FRANCIS FULFORD, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL

AND METROPOLITAN OF THE PROVINCE OF CANADA.

BY THE

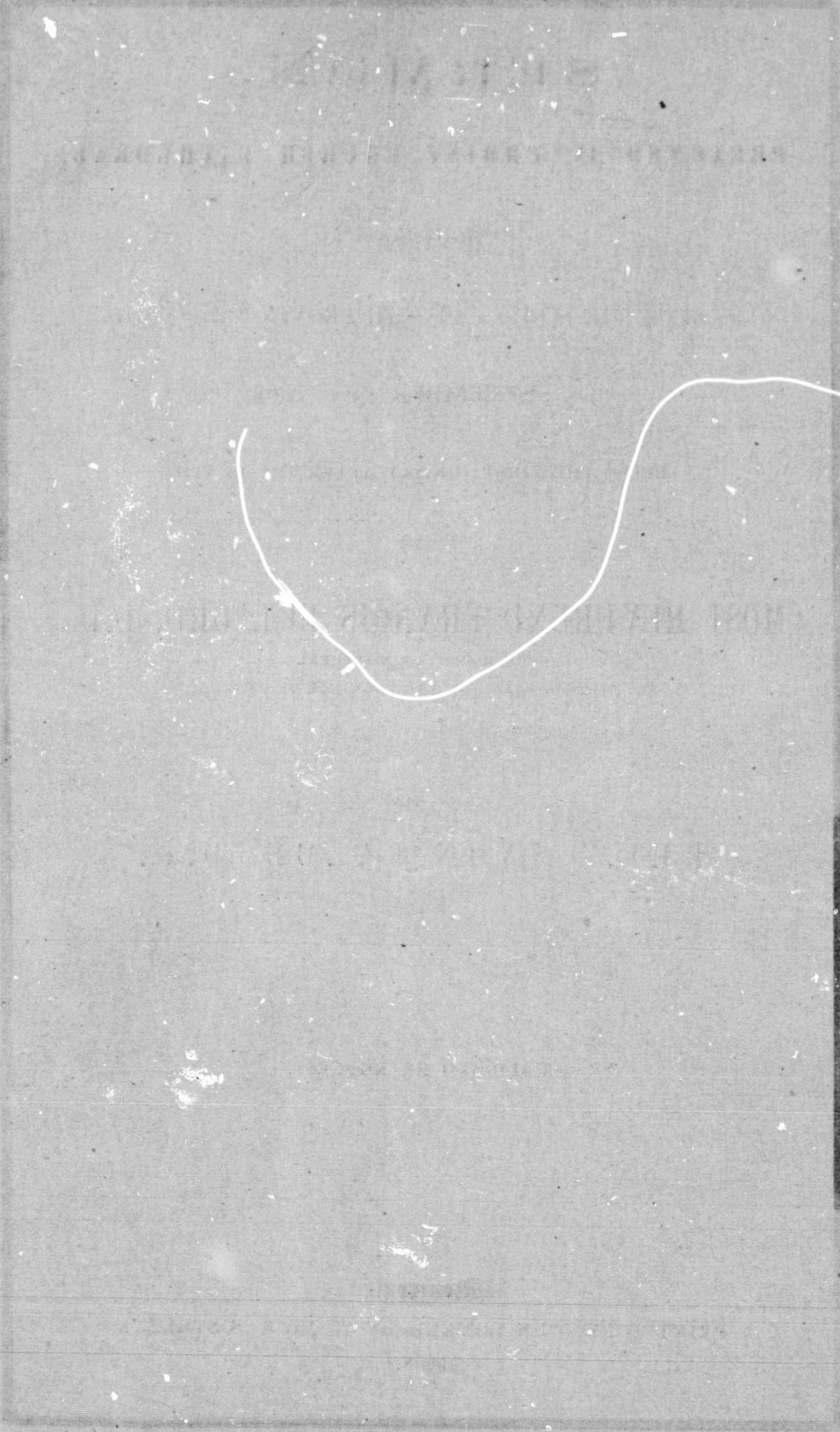
REV. CANON BALCH, D.D.

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S E R M O N .

“ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”
Revelations xiv. 13.

“ Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” What words of Holy Scripture are more fit to be uttered in the Cathedral of a Christian Bishop, draped as this is with the emblems of mourning ? Words which change the curse of death into a blessing ; words which lighten the mourner’s heart, and are balm to the wounded spirit. Scarcely one short week since, and they comforted the heart of a son, standing by the freshly made grave of a venerated father ; and to-day they give abiding consolation to a whole diocese, stricken and mourning the loss of its Right Reverend Father in God. Let us first ponder the words themselves, and then consider our great sorrow which it is intended to sanctify.

“ I heard a voice from heaven,” saith St. John. ’Twas not the voice of an angel ; ’twas not the voice of an archangel, but the same voice which he had before heard on the Mount of Transfiguration—the voice of God the Father. And to this august voice the Holy Ghost responds : “ Yea,” saith the Spirit. The text challenges our faith on the testimony of two witnesses—God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. Mark the manner in which it is given : “ Write,” saith the Father ; “ Yea,” saith the Spirit. Leave it forever on record ; give enduring, unchangeable immortality to the testimony of these divine witnesses. Write—commit it to no vain, uncertain

tradition of man. Let it not be the sport of human fancy—nor subject to all the accidents of human caprice ; but write.

And it has been written. Written in the heart of man's belief—graven in the tablets of the soul. Time and death have not blotted out a single letter, nor cast a pall of forgetfulness over this glorious revelation. Each line, and syllable and sentence, are as fresh and powerful after the lapse of ages, and amidst all the mighty conquests of sin, as when first heard by St. John. Generations now silent in the grave have clung to them. The Sacramental host of the Church militant, valiantly doing battle in the good fight of faith, will to-day press them close to their hearts and rejoice in their strength and consolation. Generations to come will have no other, and can need no other revelation. "Write,"—thank God it is written—"blessed be the dead."

But how is this ? Death, saith scripture, is a curse—the wages of sin is death. It is not an accident, but a punishment and disgrace. To be numbered with transgressors, to die by decree of law, has always been counted infamous, and such is the death inflicted upon fallen man by the law of God ; but in the face of these facts the text says, and says truly, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." The world says, "Blessed are the living." Life is a precious, joyous thing ; beautiful in childhood ; glorious in manhood ; venerable in age. But revelation takes us into the darkened room, where the prattle of the sweet innocent is silent, or the strength of manhood withered like the grass that fadeth, or where the wisdom of age can teach only the one lesson—"It is appointed unto man once to die;" and as you look on those dear remains, the voice of God the Father is heard saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

But not all the dead are blessed. You may justly inscribe the text on the tomb of St. John, but not on the grave of Iscariot. Oh, no. The dead who die in the Lord alone are

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blessed ; the wicked have no hope in the grave. Some refuse to live in Christ, and rush into eternity unholy, unpardoned. You may put their bodies into splendid coffins ; you may print their names in silver on the lids ; you may form the long procession of solemn mourners ; you may render the last sad office ; you may erect the marble monument and engraved golden epitaphs—still it is only the funeral of the lost soul—a soul unblest ; for man cannot bless what God hath cursed, and “ Cursed is he who continueth not in the works of the law to do them,” whilst “ Blessed is he who dieth in the Lord.” Only he who lives in Christ dies in the Lord. No man can die the Christian’s death who has not by faith and repentance lived the Christian’s life. “ If we say that we abide in him,” saith St. John, “ we ought also to walk even as he walks.” The Redeemer of mankind, to give us an outward example, and to provide an inward source of strength, requisite to live in the Lord, voluntarily withdrew himself from the glories of Heaven—set himself apart to the sorrows of earth and the sufferings of a vicarious death. His embassy was to make known God in the work of man’s redemption. Charged with this commission he stands before the universe the visible representative of the invisible God. To unfold for our adoration, and quicken us by the life-giving power of the divine character, was the aim and the object of his every act and word. And such must be the Church’s work. Every member, living and dying in the Lord, is bound to show forth Jesus Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus Christ in and of himself lived in and shewed forth the Father.

To persuade all men so to live and die in the Lord, the text furnishes two arguments. First, because such men having died a Christian, and therefore a blessed death, rest from their labours ; and secondly, because their works do follow them.

Rest is sweet to the weary, but no haven of rest can be found on earth. That we are taught to look for it as a motive to action and a guide to duty is proved by the divine ordinance

of the Sabbath, whilst every man's conscience recognizes its want as fundamental to our being. The labour of life and the rest of death were coeval with the beginning of the world, for God laboured six days, and rested on the seventh, giving us a promise and a pattern that if we labour with Him we should also rest with Him. No rest was necessary for the Almighty, but he rested for our instruction, to teach us that the labour of this life, if it is for God, will certainly end in the rest of Heaven.

But the fact stated by the Holy Ghost implies that rest is intended only for those who labour. The sleep of the labouring man is sweet. He that would rest with God must work for God. Everything in creation works for God, everything in Providence obeys God. He setteth up one and putteth down another. So in the Church. Every man has his specific duty assigned, of labour to be done, and work to be finished; and when it is well and faithfully done he shall enter into rest; but his labours, his works are not left behind. We are told by the text they follow him. They do not go before the soul to usurp the atoning efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, still less to insult the majesty of God by demanding eternal life as the just recompense of works done in the body. Oh, no, they do not precede, they follow the believer to heaven. You may forget the kind look, the gracious word, the friendly deed, the cup of cold water, but God does not forget them, Christ will not, the Holy Spirit cannot. The merciful shall obtain mercy. What men give and do for God in this world they shall have in the Kingdom of Heaven, with this difference, what they give up is temporal, what they receive is eternal.

Such then is the principle which sheds light on our Bishop's grave. The text says his death is blessed; he rests from his labours; his works do follow him. The text has great force applied to his death. He was taken at once from his labours to his rest; calm and peaceful and blessed was his death. No long weary interval of pain and sickness; but returning from a visitation

of his Diocese, the Master called him home. I shall attempt no eulogy. His life is his best eulogy. Nor shall I give a sketch of that life, for that belongs to another time and place. But I cannot help feeling how short was the interval between the death of the senior Bishop of the American Church and of the Metropolitan of the Church of England in Canada. The grass is hardly green over the grave of the gifted and learned Bishop of Vermont. Born in Ireland, he gave a life of labour to the Church in the States, and received every honour and dignity in the power of that Church to bestow; but, like our Bishop, with his harness on, and fresh from a diocesan visitation, in a few days he entered on his rest. The Church in Canada and the Church in the States mourn him as a father, and to-day, both Churches are again involved in a common grief. Descended from a long line of English ancestry, bearing from his early home a goodly report as a faithful parish priest—first, in the country among the poor, and then in the city among the rich, for eighteen years Bishop Fulford has, with the aid of Divine grace, in meekness and wisdom, with a consummate ability, administered the affairs of this important diocese, and discharged the high trust of Metropolitan.

Bishop Fulford was no ordinary man. His quiet dignity of manner, his simple terseness of speech, relieved on suitable occasion by a cheerful kindness eminently becoming his station, are imperishably daguerreotyped on our hearts and memories.

But, to appreciate Bishop Fulford as he should be, you must study him in his holy office as Bishop. The qualities which pre-eminently stood out to view, and then entered into and pervaded all others, and became the guiding and controlling powers of his whole character, were wisdom and justice. Wise and just! Others may have excelled him in learning, in eloquence, in zeal, and in sympathy, but as a wise master-builder, as a just ruler of the Church he had few equals.

His open dislike of partizanship was well known. He rated men,

not by their loyalty to the parties they represented, but by their zeal for the Church at large, and he ever strove to shield his diocese from the deadly effects of party strife. It is one of the trials of men holding high positions either in Church or State that they are often approached by persons with sinister designs, who seek to warp their judgments and prejudice their minds, and it was one of the striking excellencies of our venerable Bishop that he speedily penetrated such characters. The absent or the defamed needed no better advocate than the Metropolitan's own sense of right.

Bishop Fulford had no sympathy with that narrow spirit that is governed by the contracted bounds of geographical loyalty to Christ. He stood with St. Paul in a large hearted missionary zeal, and comprehended in his brotherhood the Catholic Church. He appreciated men, not because their bodies were born on one or the other side of the boundary lines of an earthly kingdom, but because their souls were born of water and the Holy Spirit, and with zeal and fidelity were doing the work of the Lord in the Kingdom of the Lord. Your own minds will readily recur in this connection to the warm interest and earnest efforts he made to promote the assembling, and further the objects contemplated by the great council which met at Lambeth. I will relate an incident of a different kind which illustrates, I think, the same fact. By the late war eleven dioceses of the United States for a while believed, and acted on the belief, that the Federal Union was broken, and therefore organized themselves under a senior Bishop of their own. When the war terminated no small anxiety was felt as to the mode in which the rupture should be healed, and harmony restored. Bishop Fulford was invited by one of the American Bishops to preach in his place at the opening of the General Council of 1865. He did preach that sermon. It is not too much to say that no sermon was ever preached on this continent before a more august Council of the Church, or on an occasion surrounded with interest of a more

solemn and momentous character to the race which speaks the English language. And when I say that the wisdom of that sermon was equal to the occasion, that the Holy Ghost gave our departed Diocesan grace to meet the delicate responsibility he assumed, and that all hearts in the great Republic beat lovingly toward him, and with warm sympathy for the Church in Canada, you will be prepared to believe what I personally know to be a fact, that he gratefully acknowledged God's mercy in thus making him the honoured instrument of promoting that object dearest to his heart—the unity, the harmony and the prosperity of Christ's Holy Catholic Church.

Were the Bishop preaching here to-day, as his mortal remains did so solemnly and silently, yesterday, it would be not to deal only with the past, except to extract fresh lessons for greater diligence in the future. He would bid us not to linger in delight over the blessed death so soon to be the believer's portion, nor the joy of the saints' rest in heaven, because the blessings of the Christian's death we can neither alter nor improve. The rest that remaineth for the people of God we do not provide, nor can we adorn. But the number and character of the works and labours which are to follow us into that world of glory we can materially increase and affect. Mary Magdalene, who, as the proxy for the human race, welcomed our Lord on the morning of his resurrection, was not permitted to linger in delight, when she fell at his feet, and exclaimed "Rabboni." Christ sent her at once to discharge her duty. Her labours were not ended; and so with each and all of us. The Church depends on no man. God can raise up children to Abraham from the very stones. A great and glorious work lies before the Church in Canada, if we are faithful, each in his station and sphere. The noble foundations, laid amidst so many trials and perils, by Mountain and Stuart and Strachan and Fulford, will be built upon by our present earnest chief pastors and faithful clergy, till our children shall see it rise a

glorious house, built on Christ, the corner stone, to the praise and glory of God.

I shall not speak of our loss, still less intrude on the sacred domain of domestic grief. But if the Metropolitan's death was blessed—if he has entered into his rest, and his works and labour of love do follow him to that world of bliss, oh, beloved brethren, how should we rejoice to be permitted to serve like him such a divine Redeemer! How consoling the thought that our turn will come before long. Many of you have been honoured long years by preaching the glorious gospel of the Son of God. One lingers yet amongst us, whose venerable form we love to see, who might well have expected his Bishop to have closed his eyes and performed the last rites of our holy religion over his remains. But he is yet spared. God spare him for many years to counsel us with his wisdom. And when, like a shock of corn fully ripe, he goes the way of all the earth, and when each and all of us shall follow, let the words of the text dwell in our heart and memories: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

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